

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 120672 TOSEC 010255

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: SCUL

SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE ON SECDEF'S STATEMENTS

FOR ATHERTON FROM SOBER

1. IN LIGHT OF HOAGLAND'S STORY ON HIS TALK WITH PRINCE ABDULLAH, WHICH CARRIED PAGE ONE ON WASH POST MAY 22, WAS BELIEVED NECESSARY TO PREPARE CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE SHOULD MATTER BE RAISED AT NOON BRIEFING. FOLLOWING GUIDANCE WAS CLEARED WITH PENTAGON BUT WAS NOT USED BECAUSE SUBJECT WAS NOT RAISED (SCHLESINGER'S REMARKS HAVE RECEIVED VERY LITTLE PRESS PLAY HERE EXCEPT FOR HOAGLAND'S STORY).

2. FOLLOWING IS CONTINGENCY GUIDANCE:

Q: ARE NOT DEFENSE SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S REMARKS ON
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POSSIBLE USE OF FORCE, WHICH HAVE UPSET THE SAUDI ARABIANS,

IN CONTRADICTION TO SECRETARY KISSINGER'S MOST RECENT ASSURANCES ON THAT SUBJECT TO SAUDI ARABIA?

A: NOT AT ALL. IF YOU READ CAREFULLY SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS POSED TO HIM, YOU WILL FIND THAT

HE SAID NOTHING MORE THAN WHAT HAD BEEN SAID BY BOTH HIM AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THIS GOVERNMENT ON NUMEROUS PREVIOUS OCCASIONS. (SEE SCHLESINGER'S REMARKS ON PUBLIC TELEVISION MARCH 31, AND AT A PRESS CONFERENCE, APRIL 2). WE DO NOT READ HIS MOST RECENT REMARKS AS CONTRADICTING WHAT SECRETARY KISSINGER SAID IN HIS AIRPORT STATEMENT UPON LEAVING SAUDI ARABIA THE LAST TIME, MARCH 19:

"I WOULD LIKE TO STATE CATEGORICALLY HERE THAT OUR RELATION WITH SAUDI ARABIA IS BASED ON FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION IN WHICH THREATS, MILITARY OR OTHERWISE, PLAY NO PART AND WE BASE OUR RELATIONSHIP ON COOPERATION AND NOT ON CONFRONTATION."

Q: WELL, ISN'T SCHLESINGER'S THREAT OF POSSIBLE USE OF FORCE IN CONFLICT WITH KISSINGER'S TALK OF COOPERATION WITH SAUDI ARABIA?

A: LOOK, WE'VE HAD A MONTH OR MORE OF EXPLANATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT. IT IS ALL IN THE PUBLIC RECORD. I SEE NO POINT IN SAYING ANYTHING MORE. THERE'S NOTHING NEW IN OUR POSITION, AND NO CHANGE FROM POLICY WHICH HAS BEEN EXPLAINED AT VERY GREAT LENGTH. WHAT SECRETARY KISSINGER SAID IN SAUDI ARABIA REMAINS U.S. POLICY.

Q: HAS THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT COMPLAINED TO YOU ABOUT SCHLESINGER'S REMARKS?

A: AS A GENERAL PROPOSITION, WE DO NOT GET INTO THE DETAILS OF OUR PRIVATE EXCHANGES WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS. BUT YOU CAN BE SURE THAT THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT KNOWS THAT U.S. POLICY IS WHAT SECRETARY KISSINGER REITERATED IN RIYADH ON MARCH 19 (AS QUOTED ABOVE).

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3. SUGGEST YOU REVIEW ABOVE GUIDANCE TO SEE WHETHER IT WOULD SUIT REQUIREMENT SHOULD ISSUE BE RAISED AT DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING MAY 23. IT WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSISTENT, OF COURSE, WITH ANY OTHER ACTS THAT MAY BE CONTEMPLATED ON OUR PART ON THIS SUBJECT. (NOTE ROBINSON'S DISCUSSION ON HIS CURRENT TRIP TO REGION).
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